

HOW TO MAKE A **SAFE ROOM**



How To Build a Safe Room

People across America are concerned. Concerned about home invasion, possibility of a financial and social collapse, possibility of war... And this concern is fueling a growing industry – safe room design and construction. Safe rooms, otherwise known as panic rooms, are secure rooms inside your home that offer you and your family a safe place to be while you wait out a dangerous situation.

Primary reasons for having a safe room include dangerous weather conditions and home invasion. Preppers dig a little deeper, installing safe rooms to wait out more long-term events, from social collapse and the associated looting, to an all-out zombie apocalypse. While this is not a novel idea and people who could afford to create safe rooms have been doing so for hundreds of years, it is becoming evident that safe rooms are not reserved for rich and famous. Businesses that deal with safes are becoming increasingly interested in making safe rooms, or at least safe room doors.

Options and Costs

When you are planning to create a safe room, you have several options.

- Build a safe room yourself using an existing room or closet;
- Build a brand new safe room;
- Hire a professional company to either retrofit a safe room or build a brand new one.

Obviously, costs will vary depending on which route you choose to take. Some preppers choose to build a bunker instead and connect it to their home via a short tunnel from the basement. Not everyone has a basement, not everyone can afford a bunker and building a tunnel is not for the faint of heart either. It also comes with having to put more money and labor into the bunker in order to not compromise its integrity and efficiency. A safe room, while is not a replacement for a bunker is definitely a good way to ensure that you

have a shelter for your family directly on your property.

There are several companies that specialize in building safe rooms. They make it a point to keep their clients' identities a secret and their building process is discreet, too. They will work on anything from a small closet to a full blown room with a bar and a Jacuzzi. They will also help you wire your room and install security and monitoring systems. If you prefer to hire professionals, here are a few companies to consider:

- StealthSafe
- The Panic Room Company
- Acorn Construction — Safe rooms built by Acorn Construction are primarily built for storm protection. They are like storm shelters inside your home, but are supposed to also withstand a near missile hit.
- Rhino Vault — This Company specializes in designing and building anything from storm shelters and safes, to safe rooms equipped with bullet proof doors.

Two Basic Options	Basic Construction	Door
Converting a closet to a safe room (includes reinforcing the walls and the ceiling, purchasing a steel door frame and other necessary modifications)	\$3000-\$5000	High quality solid wood door \$500-\$1500 Six-Panel Security Steel door \$1,500
Building a safe room above ground level (involves actually building concrete walls) Note: newly-built basement-level safe rooms have similar costs, but they will vary based on the level of waterproofing needed.	8x8x8 room can run close to \$10,000 in terms of construction, and significantly more if it is Kevlar reinforced	Bullet-proof steel door (hollow core) \$3500-\$5000 Bullet-resistant solid core wood door \$4000 Vault door \$3500-\$6000

Complete panic rooms are very expensive and can run into millions of dollars, depending on size of the room, type of reinforcement, type of technology involved in the security features, built-in or added amenities and the kind of door you choose. Below are a few rough pricing options for safe rooms: Another option is to buy a prefabricated safe room kit from Missouri Storm Shelters. They cost between \$4300 and \$9500.

Considerations

Ideally, you will consult with a trusted builder or engineer about building your safe room. They will take into consideration size requirements, wiring, security and budget. There are many different kinds of safe rooms; from a hidden space in a closet that is not even reinforced, to a designated bedroom with a reinforced locking door, to a professionally installed panic room. You have to start somewhere and sometimes, a solid wood locking door on your closet is all you can afford.

If you are serious about building a proper safe room, there are several requirements you need to consider when looking for a proper space for it.

- You must be able to get to your safe room relatively quickly;
- Safe rooms have to be able to withstand severe weather conditions, such as strong winds and the resulting flying debris, as well as the actual wind pressure;
- They have to be anchored independently of the rest of the space in order to not be turned over by winds or tornadoes;
- All parts of the room must be strongly connected to each other;
- The walls of your home and the walls of your safe room must be separated so that if the home is shot at, completely destroyed during a severe weather event, or is subject to an explosion, your safe room will (hopefully) withstand the damage.

The 2 spaces that best meet these requirements are an interior room on the main level and a space in the basement. If you find it appealing to build a safe room in your garage, it qualifies, too, as long as it has a slab-on grade foundation and is directly next to your home. Basement safe rooms generally provide the highest level of protection, but keep in mind that basements may accumulate water during heavy rainstorms and hurricanes, so you need to make sure that the design of your safe room accounts for that.

One of the easiest ways to go about creating a safe room quickly is to choose a large

closet in the central area of your house as a foundation. Needless to say, choose a closet that is on the ground floor or below ground level and has no windows. If you are looking to construct a safe room for tornado protection, you may want to consider a basement safe room.

If you are building a new safe room, you will need anchors, Simpson Strong Tie Anchors, plywood, cement (and Kevlar if desired) to secure the structure of your new room, prevent horizontal and vertical shifting, and reinforce the walls. You will have to research safe room plans or work with an engineer, architect or builder to obtain actual building guidelines and instructions.

Choosing a Door

Once you've chosen your foundational space or started working on the design for a new room, you need to measure, choose and purchase a door. Ideally your safe room will have the toughest steel door money can buy. If you want to build a safe room quickly, but cannot afford a steel door, a solid wooden door will do.

A door is arguably the most important element of your safe room and if you are serious about building the best safe room you can build, investing in an exceptional door is a must. As previously discussed, depending on your budget, goals, and speed requirements, you can start with something as simple as a solid wood locking door or something as high-tech as electromagnetic door with a pass code or fingerprint secured entry. Most of the time, you will need to work with a company that builds safe rooms to get a high-tech door. We have covered some of your options in the Options and Pricing section. Below are a few details and recommendations that have to do with buying a safe room door.

[American Security Company](#) sells incredibly strong vault doors for about \$3500. The issue with vault doors though is that they are large doors with a vault lock, meaning that they are not concealed. If you want a hidden safe room, you will have to modify your space to accommodate for a double door – one “bookshelf door” to conceal the safe room entry and one vault door to provide actual security.

[Total Security Solutions](#) offers custom bulletproof doors made from various materials. Obviously, you won't go with a see through acrylic door, but they do fabricate wood and metal doors as well. You will have to figure out what your basic requirements are and request a quote from them.

[Pacific Bulletproof Company](#) offers an array of bulletproof doors. If you choose a metal door, you can pick one out of 8 levels of protection.

You can purchase bulletproof solid core wooden doors from [Interbank Equipment](#).

[Grainger](#) also carries various types of high quality doors for you to consider.

One of the few companies offering keypad entry system right with the door is [American Saferoom Door Company](#). They manufacture pocket and swing doors specifically designed for safe rooms.

Once you choose the size and design of the door, make sure you reinforce the entryway by installing a steel door frame so that the intruders cannot kick your door in.

The next thing you have to think about is a lock. This is where it gets tricky. If you are buying a pre-manufactured security steel or solid wood door, you will have to install your own lock. If you choose a lock that can be opened on both sides with a key, there is an issue of making sure the spare key is inside, making sure that the key doesn't get into the hands of intruders or small children. This also means that you cannot simply tell your children to run to the safe room while you may need to stay out for whatever reason. You have to take them there and lock them in, which brings us to another issue... If you install a lock that only locks from the inside, you may have a young child that runs in, the door latches behind him and you have to call the fire department to get him out. You need to pick a lock that works well for your situation. A keypad entry system is among the most hassle-free and secure locks you can come by.

Wiring Your Room

If you think that you may be using your room for more than a couple of hours at a time, it is important to connect a phone jack and have grounded phone inside the safe room. Depending on how the room is reinforced, what weather conditions exist, and reception throughout your house, your cell phone may or may not work. If you are planning to use a cordless home phone, consider the possible battery loss.

It is a good idea to install monitors in the safe room to accommodate monitoring the rest of your house while you are inside. One possible scenario that may convince you to do so is if not all of the family members are able to make it to the safe room at the same

time. Imagine not knowing whether it is an intruder or a family member knocking on your safe room door. Since walls and doors in safe rooms are reinforced, you may not always hear the person's voice, but you will hear the knocking. Having a camera monitoring the exterior area of your room makes it easy to know whether you can open the door.

There are tons of options for security cameras, motion detectors and monitoring systems that will make your safe room a command center. You can even go as far as installing systems to regulate your home's electricity and heat from your safe room.

Stocking Your Room

You don't want to be caught in your safe room unprepared. Supplying the safe room with vital items will insure that you have a more comfortable stay. The most important items that you need to stock are food and water.

The rule for water is that there should be one gallon per person per day in your safe room. Many preppers choose Aqua-Pak 2.5 Gallon Rigid Water Container for long-term water storage. It is stackable, BPA free, suitable for long-term water storage, and has a hideaway spout that attaches quickly for on-demand water and removes for safe storage.

You should also store some canned foods (meats, fruits, vegetables, etc.), freeze-dried foods and dehydrated foods. Don't forget a can opener!

Be sure to have your prescriptions ready to be grabbed on the way to the safe room. Consider storing vitamins or supplements as well, in case you have to be stuck in the room for several days or weeks.

Remember to add a first aid kit including the basics and also any necessary prescription drugs. Coleman Expedition First Aid Kit is a good option; it has a hard durable case and is good for larger groups.

Bedding and 3-5 days worth of spare clothing may prove useful. You should also have flashlights, batteries, battery-operated radio, and cell phones. If you have kids have toys, board games, books, coloring books, etc., on hand.

Many preppers choose to have defensive weapons and ammo in their safe rooms. If you choose to do the same, don't forget to store them in a safe or in a locking case, out

of reach of children. Body armor will protect you and your children in case of a home invasion or natural disaster.

Fire extinguishers should be installed in your safe room in case of fires, but they can also be used as a self-defense weapon if necessary.

Put your bug out bags in the safe room as well. Dust masks, whistles, and chem lights (glow sticks) are have also been nominated as must-have safe room items.

Lastly, keep some tools to help you in case you are trapped in your safe room. These include chainsaw, fuel and bar oil; crowbar; sledge hammer; hacksaw with extra blades; safety goggles and gloves; claw hammer; box of large nails; spool of safety wire and heavy duty zip ties.

You have quite a few things to think about when planning to build or retrofit a safe room, from choosing the best place for it, to deciding on a type of room, figuring out whether to execute yourself or hire professionals, to stocking it with necessities.

One thing to keep in mind is that you should have a safe room now, today, regardless of what you can afford, regardless of other priorities you have. Especially if you have children... So start somewhere. Find a closet and buy a basic solid core door from Home Depot for \$500, install a good deadbolt lock, stock it with some water and sleep a little better.